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National Park Service

Office of Communications • Washington DC 20240 • www.nps.gov

For Release: August 27, 2001

Contact: Cindy Wood (202)208-4989

Secretary Norton Designates Two Sites in Illinois as National Historic Landmarks

WASHINGTON-- Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton today announced the designation of the Nicholas Jarrot Mansion in Cahokia, Ill., and the S.R. Crown Hall in Chicago, Ill., as National Historic Landmarks (NHL). These two sites were among 15 recommended to the Secretary by the National Park System Advisory Board for their national significance in American history and culture.

The 15 new NHLs also include the Sheldon Jackson School, Sitka, Alaska; Fresno Sanitary Landfill, Fresno, Calif.; Samuel Wadsworth Russell House, Middletown, Conn.; J.C. Lore Oyster House, Solomons, Md.; Gibson House, Boston, Mass.; Dutch Reformed Church, Newburgh, N.Y.; *Modesty*, West Sayville, N.Y.; Rudolph Oyster House, West Sayville, N.Y.; Bethania Historic District, Bethania, N.C.; Merchants' Exchange Building, Philadelphia, Pa.; Randolph Field Historic District, Bexar County, Texas; New Kent School and George W. Watkins School, New Kent County, Va.; and John Philip Sousa Jr. High School, Washington, D.C.

"These special sites underscore our heritage and tell stories of periods and events in our history," Norton said. "By preserving these unique sites, we share our culture and rich diversity with our children for future generations to learn from."

NHLs are identified by theme and special studies prepared or overseen by National Park Service (NPS) historians and archaeologists. The NPS often conducts NHL studies in partnership with federal, state, tribal or local preservation officials; the academic community; independent scholars; and others knowledgeable about a particular subject. The Nicholas Jarrot Mansion and the S.R. Crown Hall were nominated for embodying distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type exceptionally valuable for a study of the period, style or method of construction.

"National Historic Landmarks guide us in comprehending important trends and patterns in American history," said Mainella. "The Nicholas Jarrot Mansion and the S.R. Crown Hall possess those exceptional qualities that help us as a Nation illuminate and understand our complex national heritage."

The Nicholas Jarrot Mansion, built between 1807 and 1810 gives evidence of the western transmission and construction of an early American architecture: the Federal style. Located at the western boundary of the Northwest Territory, within the French Colonial region of the mid-Mississippi River valley, the design and construction of the Jarrot Mansion is an early, rare and extant example of the Federal style, seated in a region that was detached as a territorial wilderness. In addition, the mansion is a demonstration of the far-reaching influence and extent to which the Federal style was transported and reinterpreted. It is an extant example of a solid masonry building constructed within the early development of the Northwest Territory, as an expression of the architectural evolution within the early western expansion of the American territories.

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S.R. Crown Hall (1950-56), located on the Illinois Institute of Technology's main campus in Chicago, is a critically important monument in postwar construction. Taken on its own terms, the building epitomizes "Miesian" modern architecture as well as the International Style, which has long been considered - and historically accepted - as one of the 20th Century's most important and widely distributed architectural styles. Crown Hall also has both national and local significance because of its close personal and professional association with Mies van der Rohe (who was Director of the Department of Architecture from 1938-1958), and whose architecture and educational philosophy have had, and continue to have, a profound effect on the course of American architecture.

The Historic Sites Act of 1935 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to recognize historic places judged to have exceptional value to the nation. The NHL program was established to identify and protect places possessing exceptional value in illustrating the nation's heritage.

Landmarks are recognized by the Secretary of the Interior as nationally significant properties of exceptional value in representing or illustrating an important theme in the history of the Nation. These nationally significant properties help us understand the history of the Nation and illustrate the nationwide impact of events or persons associated with the property, its architectural type or style, or information potential.

All NHLs are included in the National Register of Historic Places, which is the nation's official list of the cultural resources and historic properties worthy of preservation. Landmarks constitute 2,341, or roughly 3 percent of approximately 73,000 sites listed in the National Register; the others are of state and local significance.

Most NHLs are owned by private individuals or groups. Others are owned by local, state, tribal, or federal government agencies, or may have mixed public-private ownership. Owners of NHLs are free to manage their property as they choose, provided no federal license, permit, or funding is involved. The owner agrees to observe simple preservation precepts with respect to the property and receives technical advice and assistance from preservation experts if needed.

Landmark designation offers advantages to owners who wish to preserve their properties. A bronze plaque bearing the name of the NHL and attesting to its national significance is presented to the owner upon request. NHL owners may be able to obtain federal historic preservation funding, when funds are available, and federal investment tax credits for rehabilitation as well as other provisions may apply.

The historic importance of potential landmarks is evaluated by the NPS and by the National Park System Advisory Board during meetings held twice a year that are open to the public. The Advisory Board includes citizens who are national and community leaders in the conservation of natural, historic, and cultural areas. Recommendations by the Advisory Board are made to the Secretary of the Interior on potential NHLs. Final decisions regarding NHL designations are made by the Secretary. Additional information on the National Historic Landmark program can be found on the NPS website at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/landmarks.htm>, or by contacting Carol Shull at (202)343-9504 or John Sprinkle at (202) 343-8166.

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